A Brief and Impartial

ACCOUNT OF THE NATURE OF THE Protestant Religion: ITS PRESENT STATE IN THE WORLD, ITS STRENGTH and WEAKNESS,

WITH THE

Ways and Indications of the Ruine or Continuance of its Publick National Profession.

By the late Pious and Learned Minister of the Gospel, John Owen, *D. D.*

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ACCOUNT

OF THE

UNITED

STATES

OF

AMERICA,

FROM THE

Separation of the Colonies,

TO THE

CONCLUSION

OF THE

PRESENT WAR.

THE STATE and FATE OF THE Protestant Religion.

THE World is at this day filled with discourses about the *Protestant Religion*, and the Profession of it; and that not without cause. The publick Opposition that is made unto it, the Designs that are managed with Policy and Power for it's utter Extirpation, and the Confidence of many that they will take Effect, must needs fill the minds of them whose Principal Intereſt and concerns lye in it, with many Thoughts about the Event. Never was there a greater *Cauſe* brought on the Stage for a Tryal. A *Cauſe* wherein the Glory of God is concerned above any thing at this day in the World. A *Cauſe* wherein the most Eminent prevailing Powers of the Earth are visibly ingaged as unto its Ruine; and whereunto all the Diabolical Arts of men are employed. A *cauſe* wherein those who embrace that Religion, do judge that not only their Lives, but the Eternal welfare of them and their Posterity is inevitably concerned. This cannot but fill the minds of all men with various conjectures about the Issue of these things, according as

their Intereſt works in them by Hopes and Fears. Some of them therefore do Endeavour by their Counſels and other wayes for the Preſervation and Continuance of this Proteſtant Religion amongſt our ſelves, according as they have an Acceſſion unto publick Affairs; And ſome whoſe Lot is caſt into a private capacity, do engage Faith and Prayer unto the ſame purpoſe. The Enemies of it in the mean time are powerful, active and reſtleſs; many amongſt us being uncertain in their minds, as not reſolved where to fix their Intereſt, and a greater multitude like *Gallio*, care for none of theſe things. This being a matter therefore wherein all men, who have any ſence of Religion, are ſo deeply concerned, it may not be unſeaſonable, Briefly to enquire what is this *Proteſtant Religion* which is ſo contended about; what is it's preſent *State* in the World; What it's *Strength* and *Weakneſs* as unto it's publick Profeſſion, and what is like to be the Iſſue of the preſent conteſt. This is that which the enſuing Leaves are deſigned unto: and it is hoped they may be of uſe unto ſome, to extricate their minds from involved fruitleſs Thoughts, to direct them in their Duty and to bring them unto an acquieſcency in the Will of God.

The Proteſtant Religion may be conſidered either as it is Religion in General, that is, Chriſtan Religion; or as it is diſtinct from and oppoſite unto another pretended Profeſſion of the ſame Religion, whereon it is called *Proteſtant*.

In the firſt ſence of it, it derives it's Original from Chriſt and his Apoſtles. What they taught to be believed, what they commanded to be obſerved in the Worſhip of God; All of it and nothing but that, is the Proteſtant Religion. Nothing elſe belongs unto it, in nothing elſe is it concerned. Theſe, therefore are the Principles of the Religion of Proteſtants, whereinto their Faith and Obedience are reſolved.

1. What was revealed unto the Church by the Lord Chriſt and his Apoſtles, is the whole of that Religion which God will and doth accept.

2. So far as is needful unto the Faith, Obedience and Eternal Salvation of the Church, what they taught, revealed and commanded, is contained in the Scriptures of the New Teſtament, witneſſed unto and confirmed by thoſe of the Old.

3. All that is required of us that we may pleaſe God, be accepted with him, and come to the Eternal Enjoyment of him, is that we truely believe what is ſo revealed and taught, yielding ſincere Obedience unto what is commanded in the Scriptures.

Upon theſe Principles, *Proteſtants* confidently propoſe their Religion unto the Tryal of all mankind. If in any thing it be found to deviate from them, if it exceeds in any Inſtance what is ſo revealed, taught and commanded; If it be defective in the Faith or Practice of any thing that is ſo revealed or commanded, they are ready to renounce it. Here they live and dye, from this Foundation they will not depart: *This is their Religion.*

And if theſe Principles will not ſecure us, as unto our preſent acceptance with God in Religion, and the Eternal Enjoyment of him, he hath left all Mankind at an utter uncertainty to make a blind venture for an inviſible World; which is altogether inconſiſtent with his Infinite Wiſdom, Goodneſs and Benignity.

Being in poſſeſſion of theſe Principles of Truth and Security from Chriſt and his Apoſtles, it belongs unto the *Proteſtant Religion* not to change or forgo them, and to repoſe our confidence in the Infallibility or Authority of the *Pope of Rome*, or of the Church whereof he is the Head. For theſe Principles of Aſſurance are ſuch as every way become the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of God; and ſuch as that our Nature is not capable in this life, of thoſe which

which are higher, or of a more illuſtrious Evidence. Let the contrary unto either of theſe be demonſtrated, and we will renounce the Proteſtant Religion. To forgo them for ſuch as are irreconcilable unto Divine Wiſdom and Goodneſs, as alſo to the common Reaſon of Mankind, is an effect of the higheſt Folly and of ſtrong Deluſion.

For that all Mankind ſhould be obliged to place all their Confidence and Aſſurance of pleaſing God, of living unto him, and coming unto the Enjoyment of him for Eternity, on the *Pope of Rome* and his Infallibility, however qualified and circumſtantiated, conſidering what theſe *Popes* are and have been, is Eternally irreconcilable unto the Greatneſs, Wiſdom, Love and Kindneſs of God; as alſo unto the whole Revelation made of himſelf by Jeſus Chriſt. The Principles of *Proteſtant Religion* before mentioned, do every way become, are highly ſuited unto the Nature and Goodneſs of God. No man living ſhall ever be able to inſtance in one Tittle of them, that is not correſpondent with Divine Goodneſs and Wiſdom. But on the firſt naming of this other way, no man who knows any thing what the *Pope* is, and what is his Church, if he be not blinded with Prejudice and Intereſt, will be able to Satisfie himſelf that it is conſiſtent with Infinite Goodneſs and Wiſdom to commit the Salvation of Mankind, which he values above all things, unto ſuch a Security.

Neither hath this latter way any better conſiſtency with Humane Wiſdom, or the common Reaſon of Mankind; namely, that thoſe who are known, many of them to be better and wiſer men than thoſe *Popes*, ſhould reſolve their Religion, and therein their whole Aſſurance of pleaſing God, with all their hopes of a bleſſed Eternity, into the Authority and Infallibility of the *Pope* and his Church; Seeing many of them, the moſt of them, eſpecially for ſome Ages, have been Perſons wicked, ignorant, proud, ſenſual and brutiſh in their Lives.

This

This then is the Foundation of the Proteſtant Religion, in that it is built on thoſe Principles, which are every way ſuited unto the Divine Nature and Goodneſs, as alſo ſatisfactory unto Humane Reaſon; with a refuſal of them which are unworthy of infinite Wiſdom to give, and the ordinary Reaſon of men to admit or receive.

Secondly, as the name *Proteſtant* is diſtinctive with reſpect unto ſome other pretended profeſſion of Chriſtian Religion; ſo it derives this denomination from them who in all Ages after the Apoſtaſie of the Church of *Rome* came to be expreſly *Antichriſtian*, departed from the Communion of it, oppoſed it, reformed themſelves, and ſet up the true Worſhip of God according unto the Degrees and meaſures of Goſpel Light which they had received.

This was done ſucceſſively in a long tract of Time through ſundry Ages, until by an Acceſſion of Multitudes, Princes and People, unto the ſame Profeſſion, they openly teſtified and *Proteſted* againſt the *Papal* Apoſtaſie and Tyranny, whence they became to be commonly called *Proteſtants*. And the *Principles* whereon they all of them proceeded from firſt to laſt, which conſtitute their Religion as *Proteſtant*, were theſe that follow.

1. That there are in the Scripture, Propheſies, Predictions and Warnings, eſpecially in the Book of the *Revelation*, and the *Second Epiſtle of Paul the Apoſtle to the Theſſalonians*, that there ſhould be a great Apoſtaſie or Defection in the viſible Church from the Faith, Worſhip and Holineſs of the Goſpel; and in Oppoſition unto what was appointed of Chriſt, the Erection of a worldly, Carnal, *Antichriſtian* Church-ſtate, compoſed of Tyranny, Idolatry and Perſecution, which ſhould for a long time Oppreſs the true Worſhippers of Chriſt with Bloody Cruelty, and at laſt be it ſelf conſumed with the Spirit of his Mouth, and deſtroyed by the Brightneſs of his coming.

This Defection was ſo plainly foretold, as alſo the beginning

ginning of it in a *Myſtery of Iniquity* deſigned even in the dayes of the Apoſtles, that Believers in all Ages did expect the accompliſhment of it by the Introduction of an Antichriſtian State and Power, though the manner of it was hidden from them, until it was really fulfilled. I ſay from the dayes of the Apoſtles, and the giving out of thoſe Propheſies and Predictions of the coming of Antichriſt and an Apoſtate Church State with him, all Chriſtians in all Ages, did believe and expect that it ſhould come, until it's real coming in a way and manner unexpected confounded their apprehenſions about it.

2. Their ſecond *Principle* as Proteſtants was, that this Defection and Antichriſtian Church State ſo plainly foretold by the Holy Ghoſt in the Scriptures, was openly and viſibly accompliſhed in the *Church of Rome*, with the Nations that had Subjected themſelves unto the Yoke thereof. Therein they found and ſaw, all that Tyranny and Oppreſſion, all that Pride and ſelf Exaltation above every thing that hath the Name of God upon it, all that Idolatry and falſe Worſhip, all that departure from the Faith of the Goſpel, all that contempt of Evangelical Obedience, which were foretold to come in under, and conſtitute the fatal Apoſtaſie.

3. Hereon their third *Principle* was, that as they valued the Glory of God, the Honour of Chriſt and the Goſpel, their own Salvation, and the Good of the Souls of others, they were obliged to forſake and renounce all Communion with that Apoſtate Church, though they ſaw that their ſo doing, would coſt many of them their deareſt Blood, or Lives.

4. They were convinced hereon, that it was their Duty publickly to *Proteſt* againſt all thoſe Abominations, to Reform themſelves as unto Faith, Worſhip and Converſation, according unto the Rules before laid down, as thoſe that are Fundamental unto Chriſtian Religion.

Theſe

Theſe were the Principles whereon Chriſtian Religion as it is *Proteſtant*, was reintroduced into the World, after it had been not only obſcured, but almoſt excluded out of it, as unto it's publick Profeſſion. And theſe Principles are avowed by all true Proteſtants, as thoſe whereon they are ready at all times, to put their Cauſe and Profeſſion on the Trial.

The *Way* whereby the Profeſſion of this *Proteſtant* Religion was introduced on theſe Principles and made publick in the World under the Antichriſtian Apoſtaſie, was the ſame whereby Chriſtian Religion entred the World under *Paganiſme*; Namely, by the Prayers, Preaching, Writings, Sufferings and Holineſs of Life of them who embraced it and were called to promote it. And herein their Sufferings for the number of them that ſuffered, and variety of all Cruel Preparations of Death, are inexpreſſible. It is capable of a full Demonſtration, that thoſe who were Slain by the Sword and otherwiſe deſtroyed for their Teſtimony unto Chriſt and the Goſpel, in oppoſition unto the *Papal Apoſtaſie and Idolatry*, did far exceed the number of them that Suffered for the Chriſtian Religion in all the *Pagan* Perſecutions of Old. A Plant ſo ſoaked and Watered with the Blood of the Martyrs, will not be ſo eaſily plucked up as ſome Imagine. Nay it is probable it will not go out without more blood (of ſufferers I mean) than it was introduced by; which yet no man knows how to conceive or expreſs.

But it had no ſooner fixed its Profeſſion in ſome Nations, but it was loaden with all manner of *Reproaches*, charged with all the Evils that fell out in the World after its entrance; and by all ſorts of Arts and pretences rendred ſuſpected and hateful unto Princes and Potentates. Whatever is Evil in or unto Mankind, eſpecially unto the Intereſt of great men, was with great Noiſe and Clamour charged on it. For ſo it was in the firſt entrance

of the Chriſtian Religion under *Paganiſme*. There was neither Plague nor Famine, nor Earthquake, nor Inundation of Water, nor War, nor Invaſion by Enemies, but all was charged on that New Religion. And the Reaſon hereof was, not only the Hatred of the Truth through the Love of Sin and Unrighteouſneſs, and an ingrafted power of Superſtition through blind Devotion, but Principally becauſe for a long Tract of Time, the whole of the Profeſſion of Religion had been ſuited unto the Secular Intereſts of men, ſupplying them under various pretences, with Power, Domination, Territories, Titles, Revenues, Wealth, Eaſe, Grandeur, and Honour, with an Inſinuation into and power over the Conſciences of all ſorts of Perſons; a thing very deſirable to men of corrupt Minds, and eaſily turned into an Engine unto very bad and pernicious Ends. That the whole *Complex*, and all it's parts in their various motions and Operations, of the Chriſtian Religion in the *Papacy*, is framed and fitted unto theſe Ends, ſo as to give ſatisfaction unto all corrupt and Ambitious deſires in men, is palpable unto all that are not wilfully blind. But this *Proteſtant* Religion ſo introduced, ſtated the Intereſt of Chriſtian Religion in a way and deſign utterly inconſiſtent herewith and deſtructive of it. And this was to give all Glory and Honour to God and Chriſt alone, and to teach the Guides of the Church to be Humble, Holy, Zealous Enſamples of the Flock, utterly renouncing all Secular power and Domination, with Territories, Titles and great Revenues on the account of their Office, and the Diſcharge of it. And was it any Wonder that thoſe who were in poſſeſſion of *three parts* of the Power, and a *third part* of the Revenue of moſt Nations in *Europe*, ſhould look on this Principle as the Worſt of Devils, and ſo repreſent it, as to frighten above half the Monarchs of theſe Nations from once looking ſteadily upon it, whereby they might have eaſily diſcovered the cheat that was put upon

on them. And thus was it with the firſt Planters of Chriſtian Religion with reſpect unto the Pagans, *Act.* 19. 27.

But herein many labour to make a difference between the Introduction of Religion under *Paganiſme*, and the Reformation of it under *Antichriſtianiſme*. For they ſay that the firſt Profeſſors of Chriſtian Religion for three hundred Years endured their Perſecutions with all patience, never once ſtirring up either Wars or Commotions in the defence of their Profeſſion. But ſince, upon and after the Introduction of Proteſtant Religion, there have been many Tumults and Diſorders, many popular Commotions and Wars which have been cauſed thereby. For if all the Profeſſors of it had quietly ſuffered themſelves to have been killed with the Sword, or hanged, or burned, or tortured to death in the Inquiſition, or ſtarved in Dungeons (and more was not required of them) there would have been no ſuch Wars about Religion in the World. For their Enemies intended nothing but to deſtroy them in peace and quietneſs, without the leaſt diſturbance unto the Civil Rule among men.

I ſay this Difference did not ariſe from any difference in the Religion of the One and the Other, nor of the Principles of thoſe by whom they were profeſſed. But it hath proceeded from External cauſes and circumſtances, that were greatly different between the Primitive Chriſtians and the Proteſtants in ſome places and Nations. For the Primitive Chriſtians, whoſe Story we have, were all of them placed in and Subject unto *one* Empire. In that whole Empire and all the Provinces of it, there was not one Law, Cuſtom or Uſage giving the leaſt countenance unto *Right of Protection of Liberty*. There was not one Prince, Ruler, Senate, Governour, that had the leaſt pretence of legal Right to protect or defend them in their Profeſſion againſt the Will and Law of

the Emperour or Empire. The outward Rights of Religion were no way *allied* in any thing unto the Civil Rights of men. However numerous therefore the Chriſtians were in thoſe dayes, they were all abſolutely private perſons without pretence of Law or Right to defend themſelves; in which ſtate of things it is the undoubted Principle of all *Proteſtants*, that where men are perſecuted meerly on the account of Religion without Relation unto the Civil Rights and Liberties of Mankind, their duty is patiently to ſuffer without the leaſt Reſiſtance. But it hath been otherwiſe upon the Reformation and ſince. For the Protection and Preſervation of Religion was taken up by ſundry Potentates, free Princes and Cities, who had a legal Right and Power to protect themſelves and their Subjects in the Profeſſion of it. It hath been and is at this day incorporated into the Laws, Rights and Intereſts of ſundry Nations, which ought to be defended. And no inſtance can be given of any people defending themſelves in the Profeſſion of the Proteſtant Religion by Arms, but where together with their Religion their Enemies did deſign and endeavour to deſtroy thoſe Rights, Liberties and Priviledges, which not only the Light of Nature, but the Laws and Cuſtoms of their ſeveral Countreys did ſecure unto them as a part of their Birthright Inheritance. And in ſome places though the name of Religion hath been much uſed on the one ſide and the other; yet it hath been neither the Cauſe nor Occaſion of the Wars and Troubles that have been in them. And this makes their caſe utterly different from that of the Primitive Chriſtians.

This Religion being thus reinſtated in many Nations, it brought forth *fruit* in them, even as the Goſpel did at its firſt preaching in the places whereinto it came, *Col.* 1. 6.

It brought forth *fruit* in them by whom it was received,

ceived, ſuch as is the proper Fruit of Religion; Namely it did ſo in Light, Knowledge, Truth, in Holineſs, in the real Converſion of Multitudes unto God, in Good Works, in the Spiritual Comfort of Believers in Life and Death, with all other fruits of Righteouſneſs which are to the praiſe of God. Thereby alſo was the Worſhip of God vindicated from Idolatry and Superſtition, and reſtored in many places unto it's Primitive Simplicity and Purity.

It brought alſo no ſmall Advantage even unto thoſe Nations, both Princes and their Subjects, by whom the Profeſſion thereof was never received; as Chriſtian Religion alſo did of Old unto the Pagan World. For hereby it is that the Kings and Potentates of *Chriſtendom*, even thoſe of the *Roman* Profeſſion, have much eaſed themſelves of that Intolerable yoke of Bondage that was on them unto the Popes pretended Power and his Impoſitions. For whileſt all Nations were in Subjection to him, it was at their utmoſt hazard that any one King or State ſhould contend with him about any of his Demands or Aſſumptions. For he could ſtir up what Nation he pleaſed, and give them ſufficient Encouragement to avenge his Quarrels on Rebellious Princes, which he alſo did in Inſtances innumerable. But ſince ſo many Nations fell off from all dependance on him and Subjection to him by the Light and Profeſſion of the Proteſtant Religion, there is a Ballance of Power againſt him, and an awe upon him in his Preſumptions, leſt he ſhould be dealt withall by others in the like manner. Had theſe Weſtern parts of the World continued under a Superſtitious Senſe of a Fealty and Obedience in all things due to the *Pope*, as they were before the Reformation, the *King of France* himſelf ſhould not ſo eaſily have rejected his perſonal Infallibility and Juriſdiction as he ſeems to have done; But he hath now no way left to avenge himſelf but *Aſſaſſinations*, which at this time may

may prove of very evil conſequence unto himſelf. Wherefore the Princes of *Europe*, as well thoſe by whom the Proteſtant Religion is not embraced, yea is oppoſed and perſecuted, as thoſe by whom it is received, ſeem not ſo ſenſible of the Benefit and Advantage which doth accrew unto them all thereby. For from thence alone it is, with the Intereſt and Power which it hath obtained in the World, that they are freed in their Minds and in their Rule, from as baſe a Servitude and Bondage, as ever perſons under their Denomination were Subject unto.

The common People alſo who yet continue in the Communion of the Papal Church, have received no ſmall advantage by that Effectual Light which ſhines in the World from the Principles of this Religion, even where it is not received. For from the Fear of the Diſcoveries to be made by it, hath a Curb been put upon the flagitious Lives of the *Prieſts* and *Friars*, wherewith all places were defiled; Shame alſo with Neceſſity having ſtirred them up to deliver themſelves in ſome meaſure from their old ſtupid Ignorance. Many Retrenchments have been made alſo in ſome of the moſt Groſs parts of Idolatry, that were for many Ages in General practice among them. And they are hereby alſo in ſome good meaſure freed from the Terror of evil Spirits wherewith they were continually haunted. For before the Reformation, Poſſeſſions, Apparitions, Sprights, Ghoſts, Fiends, with ſilly Miracles about them, fill'd all Places, and were a great Annoyance unto the common people. Somewhat there was no doubt of the Juggling of Prieſts in theſe things, and ſomewhat of the Agency of the Devil, each of them making uſe of the other to further their own deſigns. But upon the firſt preaching of the Goſpel, there was an Abatement made of theſe things in all places, which hath gone on, until they are every where grown the matter of Scorn and Contempt.

This Religion being thus planted, and producing theſe Effects,

Effects, the Houſe of *Auſtria* in both the Branches of it, the *Imperial* and the *Regal*, eſpouſed the Antichriſtian Intereſt and Quarrel againſt it, and for Eighty years or thereabouts, endeavoured by all wayes of Force and Cruelty its utter extirpation. What immenſe Treaſures of Wealth they have ſpent and waſted, what an Ocean of blood they have ſhed, both of their own Subjects and others in the purſuit of this Deſign, cannot be well conceived. But what hath been the Iſſue of all their undertakings to this End? They have ſo far broken themſelves and their Power in their obſtinate purſuit of them, that thoſe who not long ſince thought of nothing leſs than an univerſal Monarchy, are forced to ſeek unto *Proteſtant* States and Nations, to preſerve them from immediate Ruine. So vain, fooliſh and fruitleſs for the moſt part are the deep Counſels and Projections of men, ſo deſtructive and ruinous unto themſelves in the Iſſue, when their Deſires and Deſigns are enlarged beyond the Bounds which Right and Equity have fixed unto them; eſpecially will they be ſo, when they are found fighting againſt God and his Intereſt in the World. And if the ſame Deſign be now purſued by another, it will in time come unto the ſame *Cataſtrophe*.

I ſhall not ſpeak any thing of the preſent State of this *Proteſtant* Religion, as unto it's Political Intereſts in the World. It is in general known to moſt, and hath been particularly enquired into by many. I ſhall only briefly conſider ſomething of it's Weakneſs, it's Danger, and what is like to be the Iſſue of it, as unto it's publick Profeſſion in the World, which are the Subjects of many mens daily converſe.

The *Political* Weakneſs of the Proteſtant Religion ariſeth ſolely from the *Diviſions* that are among them by whom it is profeſſed. And theſe are of two ſorts. Firſt, ſuch as are of a Civil nature amongſt Princes and States; And Secondly

condly, ſuch as are Religious among Divines and Churches. As unto the firſt of theſe, ſome good men who value Religion above all their earthly Concerns, meaſuring other Men, even Princes, who profeſs Religion, by themſelves, have been almoſt aſtoniſhed that there is not ſuch a thing as a *Proteſtant Intereſt* ſo prevalent amongſt them, as to ſubordinate all particular Conteſts and Deſignings unto it ſelf. But whereas there was formerly an Appearance of ſome ſuch thing, which had no ſmall Influence on publick Counſels, and produced ſome Good uſeful Effects; at preſent it ſeems to be beyond hopes of a revival, and is of little conſideration in the World. Could ſuch a thing be expected, that the Nations and the Powers of them which publickly profeſs the *Proteſtant Religion*, ſhould avow the preſervation and protection of it to be their principal Intereſt, and regulate their Counſels accordingly, giving this the preheminence in all things, their Adverſaries would be content to dwell quietly at home, without offering much at their diſturbance. But theſe things are not of my preſent conſideration, nor do I think that any ſort of men ſhall have the Glory of preſerving the Intereſt of Chriſt in the World; he will do it himſelf.

Again, the *Religious* Differences that are amongſt them as Churches, do weaken the *Political* Intereſt of Proteſtants. They have done ſo from the very beginning of the Reformation. And when the firſt Differences among them were in ſome meaſure digeſted and brought unto ſome tolerable compoſure, about ſixty years ago there was an inrode made on the Doctrine that had been received among the *Reformed* Churches by *Novel* Opinions, which hath grown unto this day to the great weakning of the whole Intereſt. And as far as I can ſee, it is in vain to diſſwade men from contending about their ſmall Allotments in the Houſe, or it may be but ſome ſuppoſed Appurte-

purtenances of them, whileſt others are viſibly digging at the Foundation to oppreſs them all with the fall of the whole Fabrick. In theſe things lyes the Sole outward Political Weakneſs of the Proteſtant Intereſt in the World, whoſe direful Effects God alone can prevent.

We may hereon Enquire, what at preſent is like to be the Iſſue and event of this Proteſtant Religion as unto it's *publick Profeſſion in the World.* For the Adverſaries of it do every day diſcover not only their Deſires and Endeavours for its extirpation, but their Expectations alſo of its ſpeedy ruine. They ſuppoſe the time is come when that *Hereſie*, as they call it, which hath ſo long infeſted the *Northern Nations*, ſhall by their Arts, Contrivances and Power be utterly rooted out. And it is known that thoſe Diſcoveries of their minds and hopes herein, which have occaſionally come unto Light amongſt us, are but Indications of thoſe Counſels and Combinations in other places and among other perſons, whereby their Hopes are to be accompliſhed. And if it were unto our preſent purpoſe, much might be offered to manifeſt that thoſe Conſultations and Contrivances which are conſtant in the managers of the Papal Intereſt both at *Rome* and elſewhere, for the utter Extirpation of the Proteſtant Religion, have been Ordered, diſpoſed and caſt into ſuch methods, as not only to ſtir up all means of Expedition, but alſo with reſpect unto a ſpeedy immediate Execution.

We ſhall therefore briefly enquire, by what way and means this may be effected, or what is like to give this Deſign an accompliſhment, giving every thing its due weight and Conſideration; for what the event will be God only knows.

The Ruine of the *Proteſtant Religion* as unto it's publick Profeſſion, muſt be either by a general *Defection* from it, or by a *Force* upon it; or by a *Reconciliation* and Coaleſceny with the *Roman* Church.

This Defection muſt be either of the *Princes*, or of

the *Clergy*, or of the *People* or of them all in Conjunction.

Of the firſt, or the Defection of Princes unto the Papacy we have had ſome inſtances in the laſt Age, but ſcarce of any who have been abſolutely Soveraign or Supream; unleſs it be of *one*, who together with her Religion, wiſely and honeſtly left her Crown. But I ſuppoſe there lyeth here no great danger or fear as to *Kings*, or ſuch as on whoſe Authority the Profeſſion of Religion in their Dominions doth much depend. For they are too wiſe to be weary of their preſent ſtation and Liberty. Who can ſuppoſe that any of them would be willing to ſtand at the Gates of the Popes Palace bare-foot, for a Night and a Day, and be Diſciplin'd to boot, as it was with one of the greateſt Kings of *England*? or to hold the *Popes* Stirrup, whileſt he mounted his Horſe, and be rebuked for want of Breeding in holding it on the wrong ſide? or would they lye on the Ground, and have their Necks trod upon by the Pope, which a Couragious Emperour was forced to ſubmit unto? or have their Crowns kick't from their Heads by the foot of a Legate? or be Aſſaſſinated for not promoting the *Papal* Intereſt in the way and mode of them concerned, as it was with two Kings of *France*?

It will be ſaid, that theſe things are paſt and gone, the *Popes* have now no ſuch power as formerly; and the Kings that are of the *Roman* Church, do live as free from Impoſitions on them by the pretenſions of Papal Power, as any Kings on the Earth. But ſuppoſing ſuch a change, and that the *King of France*, as great as he is, do find in the Iſſue that there is ſuch a change, yet if we do not know the Reaſons of it, they do. Is it becauſe the maintainers of the Papacy have changed their Principles and Opinions in this matter? Is it that they have diſclaimed the Power and Authority which they exerciſed

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in former Ages? Is it from any Abatement of the Papal *Omnipotency* in their Judgment? Do they think that the Popes had not Right to do what they did in those dayes, or that they have not yet Right to do the like again? It is none of those nor any Reason of this sort that is the cause of the pretended Change. The true and only Reason of it, is the ballancing of their power by the *Protestant* Interest. So many Kings, Princes Potentates, States and Nations being not only fallen off from that blind Obedience and Subjection wherein they were universally enthralled unto them in those dayes, but ready to oppose them in all their attempts to Exercise their pretended Power, they are forced for a Season to lower their Sayls, and to pluck in those Horns wherewith formerly they pushed Kings and Princes unto their Ruine. Should there be a Restauration of their Power and Interest in the minds of men, which would ensue on the Extirpation of the Protestant Religion, the greatest Kings of *Europe* should quickly find themselves yoked and over-matched both in their own Dominions, and by such as will be ready to Execute their Designs. And on this Supposition, they will cross all Experience of former Ages, if having weathered their Difficulties and Conquered their opposers, they be not more haughty and secure in the Execution of their Power and pretended Office, than ever they were before.

Whatever Delusion therefore may befall Soveraign Princes in their personal Capacities, none of them can be so forsaken of common Understanding, as not to see that by a Defection unto the *Papacy*, they bring a Bondage on themselves and their Subjects, from which God by his Providence through the Light and Truth of the Protestant Religion had set them free. And it is certain enough that there is at this day so much rational Light diffused in the World, that even those who on various inducements may comply with any of them in the Reintrodu-

ction of Popery into any of their Territories, will quickly find what condition of Slavery and contempt they have brought themſelves into, and thereon make the new poſture of Affairs very uneaſie to themſelves and their Rulers. Yea no ſort of men will be given up unto more furious Reflections, firſt on themſelves, and then on others, than they will be, when they find themſelves enſnared. Thoſe who on ſuch occaſions have neither deceived themſelves, nor ſuffered themſelves to be deceived by others, may enjoy a ſedate Tranquillity of mind, in all that ſhall befall them. But theſe when they have digeſted the ſhame of being deluded, will be reſtleſs in their Minds, and intent on new occaſions. I ſuppoſe therefore there is no great danger to be feared on this hand, and if there ſhould, that the Event of Counſels mixed with ſo much madneſs and ingratitude will be a ſuddain *Cataſtrophe*.

And as unto the *Clergy*, there can be no Defection amongſt them, unleſs it be from a Wearineſs of their preſent Station, upon the Principles of the Proteſtant Religion. For they have moſt of them too much Light to be corrupted any way but by Intereſt. Now the Principles intended are theſe two. (1.) That the Reverence which they claim, and the Revenues which they poſſeſs, are not due unto them meerly on the account of their Offices and the Titles which they bear, but on that of their Faithful diſcharge of their Office in diligent Laborious Preaching of the Goſpel, and Sedulous Endeavours for the Converſion and Edification of the Souls of Men. This Principle lay at the Foundation of the Reformation, and was one of the greateſt means of its Promotion. (2.) That a diſtinction from the People by Sacred Office, requires indiſpenſibly a diſtinction from them in Gravity, Uſefulneſs and Holineſs of Converſation. If Men ſhould grow weary of their Station in the *Clergy* on thoſe Principles (and others the *Proteſtant* Religion will not afford them) it is to be feared that on provoking

voking occaſions they may verge unto that Church-State, wherein all things deſirable unto them in this World, will be ſecured on eaſier terms. And the Danger will be encreaſed, if they are capable of Envy and Vexation from thoſe Principles of Light and Liberty which have been communicated unto the People by the *Proteſtant* Religion, rendring all Expectations of Reverence and Honour but what ariſeth from, and is proportionate unto real worth and uſefulneſs, altogether vain. And if hereon they are expoſed to impreſſions from the Wealth, Eaſe, and Power propoſed unto them in the *Papal* Church, it is to be feared that they may regulate themſelves by opportunities. And on theſe grounds, not a few *Miniſters in France*, being withal at the ſame time under the dread of Trouble and Perſecution, have gone over unto the adverſe Party. In the mean time there is ſome Relief herein, that the Generality of Mankind is ſo far enlightned, that no Pleas or Pretences of other Reaſons for ſuch a Change or Defection will bear the leaſt Admittance, but it will be aſcribed unto corrupt Affection and carnal Intereſt. However, if it be contained, as many judge it is, in the Propheſies of the *Revelation*, that the Churches of the Nations who were once of the Communion, and in ſubjection unto the Church of *Rome*, ſhall be reſtored unto her Power and Poſſeſſion again, at leaſt for a ſhort Seaſon, this ſort of Men muſt be ſignally inſtrumental therein. And if there be any Nations where theſe two things concur, that all Church or Eccleſiaſtical Power and Juriſdiction, is by the Law of the Land veſted in the King, being as unto its whole Exerciſe derived from him alone, whereby that which he is, the Church is as to Power and Juriſdiction, and nothing elſe; and where the *Clergy* do hold and derive their Spiritual Power, their Power of Order and Office by a *Flux* and deſcent of it from the Church of *Rome* and the Authority thereof, upon the Acceſſion of

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a *Papiſt* unto Supream Rule, it will be very difficult, if not impoſſible long to ſecure the publick Profeſſion of the *Proteſtant* Religion in ſuch Nations. I ſay in this Caſe, although the *Proteſtant* Religion may be preſerved in Multitudes of Individuals and their voluntary Societies in the Communion of it; Yet in ſuch a Church State its publick Profeſſion cannot long be continued; for it will quickly be diſſolved by its own inteſtine Differences; which every wiſe Man may eaſily foreſee. But the Force of Law, Intereſt and Inclination is hardly to be withſtood.

The danger of Defection from the Profeſſion of the *Proteſtant* Religion in the *People*, muſt be meaſured from the Preparations for it that are found amongſt them, and the Means of their furtherance. Now theſe are nothing but the vitious Habits of the Minds of Men, enclining their Affections to take Shelter in the *Papal* Superſtition. Such are Ignorance, Lewdneſs of Converſation, Provocations from the power of Religion in others, Atheiſm and Intereſt, from hopes of Advantage propoſed unto ſome of them who have an influence on others. There can be no Defection unto *Popery* in or among the People, who have ever known any thing of the *Proteſtant* Religion, but what proceeds from theſe Cauſes, which wholly obliterate all ſence of its Power, all delight in its Truth, and diſpoſe Men unto any thing wherein they hope they may find a better compliance with their Inclinations, or at leaſt free them from that whereof they are weary, and wherein they find no Advantage. And the means whereby theſe things are promoted in them, are want of due Inſtruction, Examples of Sin and Impunity therein, Publick diſcountenance of the Power of Religion, Perſonal and Family Neceſſities through Pride or Senſuality, with deſire of Revenge.

Where theſe things abound in any Nation, amongſt any People, there is no Security of their *Stability* in that Pro-

Profeſſion of Religion which yet they avow. For all theſe things will continually operate in their Minds, and occaſions will not be wanting in the watchful diligence of the Devil and his Inſtruments, to excite and provoke their corrupt Luſts unto a Declenſion from their Profeſſion, which with many of them will be carried on gradually and inſenſibly, until they find themſelves enſnared in the *Papal* Intereſt beyond what they can extricate themſelves out of.

I ſhall make no Conjectures concerning the ruine or total loſs of the publick Profeſſion of the *Proteſtant* Religion, from thoſe wayes and means of a *general Defection* from it. For if there were more danger in them than there is, I know there is yet a way whereby they may be all defeated. And this being in the Hand of God alone, with him it is to be left, and unto his care it is to be committed.

Force is the next way whereby the ſame effect may be produced. And this is that which thoſe of the *Roman* Intereſt do place their Principal Confidence in; and it is that which they Judge they may lawfully make uſe of, whenever they are able ſo to do. Be the force eſteemed neceſſary unto this End, of what ſort it will; be it by private Aſſaſſinations, Legal Perſecutions, National Oppreſſions, forreign Invaſions, all is alike unto them; they are all of them to be made uſe of, as their ſuppoſed Opportunities do require. That which at preſent doth moſt encourage their Hopes and Expectations on this ground of them, is the Power and Inclinations of the *French* Monarch, and the Influence they have on the Counſels and Actings of other Nations. But that whole Buſineſs ſeems to me on many accounts, to be but *res unius ætatis* at moſt; many Countreys may be ravaged and ſpoyled, and new Work cut out for another Age, but a ſtated Intereſt for the *Papal* Advantage, will ſcarcely be fixed thereby. They muſt

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be a People of another temper and complexion of mind than our Neighbours are, of a more profound Melancholy and Superſtition, than they are Subject unto; of leſs vehement deſires of their own, and leſs Subject to alter in their Deſigns on Provocations and Diſappointments, who are fit pertinaciouſly to purſue the Advancement of the *Papal* Power and Dominion, wherein themſelves at length ſhall be no ſharers. But where there is a concurrence of all theſe things; namely, an Inclination in many of all Sorts unto a Defection, Preparations in the Minds of more thereunto, the Perſecution of ſome ſo far as the Laws will permit, and juſt fears of a greater outward force, Relief and Safety is to be expected only from Divine Power and Goodneſs.

The Third way whereby the publick Profeſſion of the *Proteſtant* Religion may be ruined in any Nation, or Univerſally, is by a *Reconciliation* unto the Church of *Rome*. For although this be really of the ſame nature and kind with that of the Defection before ſpoken of, yet ſeeing it is to be effected by a pretended mutual *Condeſcenſion*, it will be averred to be different from a total Defection. That which I intend is a *Coaleſcency* in the ſame Church-State, Faith, Worſhip and Rule with the Church of *Rome*, on ſuch Conceſſions, and Reliefs from ſome preſent Impoſitions, as ſhall on both ſides be agreed on. And this is the moſt plauſible Engine for attaining the Fatal End deſigned, that can be made uſe of; and poſſibly the moſt likely to take effect. The pretences of the Peace of *Chriſtendom*, and the Union of Chriſtians (though nothing leſs be intended, than that Peace and Union which Chriſt hath appointed; nor will the Peace pretended be ever attained by it) are ſuited to cover and overwhelm Men with Reproaches, who ſhall but endeavour to diſcover their falſity and folly. But the preſent poſture of Counſels and Affairs in the World, calls for ſomewhat a more diſtinct con-

consideration of these things, which yet shall be but Preparatory unto what shall be further discoursed unto the same purpose, if the process in the Design do further manifest it self.

From the very beginning of the Reformation there have been various Attempts for a Composition of the Differences between the Church of *Rome*, and those who were departed from it. Councels of Princes, Conventions of Divines, Imperial Edicts, Sedate Consultations of Learned Men, have all been made use of unto this End, and all in vain. And it was for a while the Judgment of most Wise men, that the *Council of Trent* had rendred all Reconciliations, so much as by a pretence of any Condescention on the part of *Rome*, utterly impossible. For it hath bound it self and all the World that will own its Authority, under *Solemn Curses*, not to make any change or Alteration in the present State of the *Papal* Church, though the Salvation of all Men living should depend thereon.

Yet notwithstanding the fixing of this unpassable Gulph between the two Churches or Religions, some persons professing the Protestant Religion, either angry at their Station and disappointments in the World or Ambitious above their Station in the Protestant Church, though of the Highest Dignity attainable in it; or out of an Itch or Curiosity of venting their *Conciliatory* Notions, as they suppose them, and so to entitle themselves unto the name of *Peace-makers*, have in the foregoing and present Age revived the same fruitless Design, but hitherto without success.

But it must be confessed, that at present things are more prepared for the plying of this Engine, and making it Effectual unto the Ruine of the Protestant Religion, than they were in former Ages; whereof I shall give some Instances.

Sundry Learned men, who have made themselves of

great Name and Reputation thereby, have in their publick Writings granted a *Patriarchal Primacy in the Weſt unto the Biſhop of* Rome, which is meet to be reſtored. And therewithall they have relinquiſhed the true Grounds of the Reformation : For whereas the real Cauſes and Reaſons of it were the Idolatry, Hereſies and Tyranny of the Church of *Rome*, which every private Chriſtian might underſtand, and was bound to Separate from in his own Perſon, were there no other of his Mind in the World but himſelf alone, and had Right ſo to do; they have reſolved it into the Power of a *National Church* in that *Patriarchate*, with their Supream Civil Ruler, to reform it ſelf from ſuch things as they eſteem abuſes. Now as this is a matter wherein the Conſciences of the People or private Chriſtians, are not concerned; ſo it is built on ſundry Arbitrary preſumptions that have not the leaſt Countenance given unto them from the Word of God. And as this Endeavour tends directly to divert the Minds of Men from the true Cauſes and Reaſons of the Reformation, whereon all the *Martyrs* died; ſo it leads directly upon a Relief againſt the pretended abuſes, to return unto the Pope as an Head of Unity and Peace unto all Churches, at leaſt in theſe *Weſtern* parts of the World, which is all that at preſent is pleaded for, by many of the *Papiſts* themſelves. For the Diſpute, they ſay, about the *Pope*, his Power and Infallibility, you need not trouble your ſelves; let the *Biſhop* of *Rome* in his Succeſſion from St. *Peter* be acknowledged as an Head of Unity and Peace unto all Chriſtians, with a *Patriarchal* Power, and no more ſhall be required of you, that is at preſent; for the *Pope* will be *Pope* whileſt he is ſo; that is, until he is utterly caſt out of the Church. But by ſuch Conceſſions as theſe, the way is preparing for a compoſition as unto the outward Order and Rule of the Church.

As unto the Internal part of Religion, in Doctrines of Faith

Faith, there is no ſmall advance towards a Reconciliation in the Introduction of *Novel Opinions* into the *Proteſtant* Profeſſion. For although on their firſt entrance among us, they were publickly proteſted againſt by the *Commons of* England *in Parliament*, as introductory of *Popery*; yet their prevalency ſince hath been ſo great, as that their Abettors are ready to avow them as the Doctrine of the preſent Church. Yet are they all of them oppoſite unto the fundamental Principles of the Reformation, which were to exalt the Grace of God, and debaſe the Pride of Men; from the contempt of which Principles, all the Abominations of the *Papacy* did ariſe. And this progreſs towards a Reconciliation is daily improved by the endeavours of ſome to leſſen all the Doctrinal differences between the *Papiſts* and *Proteſtants*, and to make them appear as things not worth the ſtriving or contending about.

The ſame work is carried on by the labours and endeavours of many in their publick Writings, to divert the making Application of Scripture Propheſies and Predictions of an Apoſtatical Antichriſtian Church-State, unto the Church of *Rome*. The perſwaſion hereof (as it is a moſt undoubted Truth wherein the Souls of Men are concerned) is the Principal means of preſerving the Body of the People in an averſation unto *Popery*. If you can once perſwade them, that the *Pope* is not Antichriſt, that the Church of *Rome* is not that Idolatrous Tyrannical State foretold in the Scripture, many would be very indifferent how you treat with them, or what compoſition you ſhall make for your ſelves. But it is hoped, that the broad Light which ariſeth from the Evidence, the Pope and his Church for many Ages

have given of themſelves ſo to be, by their Idolatries, Perſecutions, Murders, *Luciferian* Pride, trampling on the Power and Perſons of Kings and all ſorts of Perſons, in conjunction with the *Characteriſtical* Notes of Times, Places, Riſe, Progreſs, Nature and Actings of that Church State in the Scripture, will not eaſily be extinguiſhed.

There is no ſmall prevalency in the World of an *Atheiſtical* Principle lately advanced, namely, of Reſolving all reſpect unto the publick Profeſſion of Religion into the Wills and Laws of Men in Supream Power. It is ſuppoſed herein, that Men may be in their own Minds of what Religion they pleaſe, and be as Religious as they will. But for the preſervation of Society it is meet that the Wills of Lawgivers in all Nations ſhould be the Sole Rule of the outward Profeſſion of Religion. Now although this *Atheiſtical Opinion* be deſtructive of Chriſtian Religion, condemning all the Profeſſors of it from its firſt entrance into the World of the higheſt Folly imaginable, yet being ſuited to accommodate all the Luſts and Intereſts of Men profane and ungodly, it is incredible what a progreſs in a ſhort time it hath made in the World. And thoſe who have imbibed it are ready for all ſuch compoſitions in Religion, as may be ſuppoſed any way Commodious unto their Inclinations and Intereſts.

I ſhall only mention that which of all other things is of the worſt abode, namely, the Loſs of the Power of Religion in all ſorts of Perſons. The *Proteſtant* Religion will not any where long maintain its Station any otherwiſe, than by an Experience of its Power and Efficacy on the Souls of Men. Where this is loſt through the power of prevalent vitious

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Habits of the minds of Men, the whole of that Religion will be parted withall at an easie Rate. For there is another continually proposed unto them, with those entertainments for Mens Fancies and carnal Affections, with those accommodations for their Lusts Living and Dying, with outward Secular advantages, that this Religion is not capable of, nor accompanied withall.

This is that which guided with an Eye to outward Advancement, hath in the last Age lost great numbers of the Nobility of *France* and *Poland*, and other places, from the Profession of the Gospel, whose Ancestors were renowned Champions for the Truth of it. For to what end should Men entertain a Religion which they find no inward Spiritual Advantage by, and are for the Profession of it exposed unto all sorts of outward disadvantages? And this sort of Men, will at any time greedily embrace such a Reconciliation with the Church of *Rome*, as by the Terms of it may a little shelter their Reputation, and make a pretence of Satisfying some Traditiona Convictions of the Truth which they had professed.

Moreover, unless it be diligently watched against, wearines is apt to grow on many of the *Clergy*, of that Spiritual Rule and Conduct of the People, which according to the Principles of the *Protestant* Religion, is committed unto them. For there hath by Vertue thereof, so much Light and Knowledge been diffused among the People, and such a valuation of their Spiritual Liberty thereon, which formerly they knew nothing of, that there is an excellent Vertue and Piety, with continual care and watchfulnes required unto the Rule of them; and yet when the best of Men have done their utmost herein also, they will

will meet with that which ſhall exerciſe their Wiſdom and Patience all their Dayes. Neither hath Chriſt granted any Rule or Office in his Church on any other Terms; nor will the ſtate of his Subjects, who are all Voluntiers, permit it to be otherwiſe. No wonder then if ſome do Like thoſe Engines of an eaſie Rule, namely, Ignorance and blind Devotion in the People, and ſo are Ready to return unto them again. For it is a monſtrous weariſome thing for Men of *Heroick* Governing Spirits, to be obliged to give conviction from the Scripture unto ſuch Perſons as they judge impertinent, of what they do; much more to order their Converſation with ſtrictneſs, that no offence be taken at them. This poſture of things Men ſeem to be weary of, and therefore do daily Relinquiſh them, ſo far as they can pretend any conſiſtency between what they do, and the Religion which they profeſs. But the utter ſhaking off of thoſe Bonds and Manacles, unworthy of Men of generous Spirits, muſt needs ſeem more eligible unto them. And if hereon ſuch Terms of Reconciliation be offered, as ſhall not only ſecure unto them their preſent Poſſeſſions and Dignities, but give them alſo a proſpect of farther advancement, it is to be feared that many of this ſort will judge it better to embrace things ſo deſirable, than to die in a Priſon, or at a Stake.

Beſides all theſe, there is at preſent a coincidence of Two things, that exceedingly encline the Minds of many unto an *Eccleſiaſtical Coaleſcency with the Church of* Rome. And theſe are, *Firſt*, An Ignorance or Forgetfulneſs of what the *Papacy* was, and will again be; and *then* a ſence of ſome provocations given or ſuppoſed to be given them by the *Proteſtant* Religion, or thoſe that profeſs it. Alas! what harm

harm hath the *Papacy* ever done to them? It may be they can give inſtances wherein they have had Advantage by it, or by them that belong unto it. But every thing which they ſuppoſe evil, and find inconvenient unto their preſent inclinations, they ſuſpect to proceed from the Principles of the *Proteſtant* Religion, from whence they have already received many provocations.

Theſe are ſome of the Reaſons which make it evident, that there may be no ſmall danger unto the publick Profeſſion of the *Proteſtant* Religion (the thing enquired after) from the preſent Deſign of not a few, to make a *Reconciliation* of the two Religions, and to bring all Men into a Coaleſcency in Faith, Worſhip and Rule with the Church of *Rome*. Now as there is little Hope to prevail with them who are under the Power of theſe things and conſiderations, or are influenced by them, by Arguments Religious and Rational; ſeeing they have all of them their Foundation in ſuch corrupt Affections, Inclinations and Intereſts, as are more deaf than an Adder unto ſuch Charms; yet for the ſake of others not as yet engaged by ſuch Prejudices, I ſhall manifeſt in a few Inſtances the folly and Wickedneſs of Attempting, or complying with any Reconciliation with the *Church of Rome*.

For, in the firſt place, be it on what Terms it will, it is a Renunciation of the Fundamental Principle of the Reformation; namely, that the Church of *Rome* is that *Idolatrous Antichriſtian State* which is foretold in the Scriptures. For if it be ſo, the Perſons that belong unto it may be converted, but the State it ſelf is to be deſtroyed. And to joyn our ſelves unto, or coaleſce in that Church-State on any

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Terms whatever, that the Lord Chriſt hath deſigned to deſtruction, is both fooliſh in it ſelf, and will be ruinous in the iſſue unto our Souls.

For it will hence alſo follow, that we intereſt our ſelves in the Guilt of all that innocent Blood which hath been ſhed by the Power of that Church-State for a diſſent from it. For this Guilt which is *next* unto that of the Church of the *Jews*, in murdering the Head of the Church, and every way *Equal* unto that of the *Pagan* World in the Blood ſhed in their Perſecutions, for which it was Temporally and Eternally deſtroyed, lies charged on this Church-ſtate, and will reach unto all that ſhall chooſe an Eccleſiaſtical Conjunction therein. And let ſuch Perſons flatter themſelves whilſt they pleaſe, and ſlight theſe things, as thoſe wherein they are not concerned, they will find them true to their coſt, here or hereafter.

Neither will Men of any Light or Ingenuity eaſily renounce the whole work of Gods Grace and Power in the Reformation, and caſt the Guilt of all the Diviſions that have been in the World, on the part of the *Proteſtants*. For ſeeing they have all been on the account of the *Church-ſtate of* Rome, in oppoſition whereunto the Martyrs laid down their Lives, a Coaleſcency on any Terms in and with that Church-ſtate, doth include a condemnation of all that hath been done or ſuffered in oppoſition thereunto. The preaching of the Goſpel hath been but a Fancy; the ſuffering of the Martyrs was the higheſt Folly; the Glory given to God on theſe accounts, little leſs than Blaſphemy, is the Language of ſuch a Coaleſcency.

The Vanity alſo of the *Terms of Reconciliation* which are

are or may be propoſed, is obvious unto all that are not wilfully blind. For the Church of *Rome* preſerving its eſſentially conſtitutive Principles, and its Being as ſuch, can make no ſuch Condeſcenſions, as ſhall not keep ſafe and ſecure the whole Malignity of their Faith and Worſhip. When any thing that hath the ſhew, or Appearance of a Conceſſion, as ſuppoſe *Prieſts Marriage, the Cup unto the Laity, and the Service of the Church in a known Tongue* is propoſed, it is Natural for all Men to commend and approve of what is ſo done, becauſe it is a kind of Relinquiſhment of things grievous and Tyrannical. At the firſt Propoſal few will judge theſe things to be ſufficient, but will encourage themſelves in an expectation of further Condeſcenſions; and will be ready to aſſure others that they will enſue; But yet when they find themſelves defeated herein, they will take up the Management of the Cauſe and contend, that this is enough at preſent for ſober Men, ſeeing no more can be attained. But in Reality this Reconciliation will prove a total Defection from the *Proteſtant* Religion. For the Church of *Rome* neither will, nor can part with any thing that ſhall change its Antichriſtian-State and Idolatrous Worſhip. The whole of their pretenſion is but a Decoy to get us into their Power, where we ſhall be made to underſtand both where we are, and where we have been alſo. And thoſe which ſhall be moſt inclinable unto ſuch a Reconciliation as is deſigned, unleſs they alſo become flagitious Perſecutors of thoſe whom they have left, as is the manner of moſt *Apoſtates*, will find their former faults called over to the purpoſe, and ſuch baſe acknowledgements required of them, as ingenuous Perſons would rather chooſe to die than be brought unto. But although univerſal Experience confirms this to be the certain and undoubted iſſue of a return unto their Power,

from which Men are judged to have broken away unjuſtly, what ever *Salvo*'s ſeem to be provided againſt it; yet thoſe concerned cannot think it ſhall be ſo with them, but rather that they ſhall be dearly embraced, and highly promoted, if not for their Return, yet for their being early and ſedulous therein. But if they find this Entertainment with them, who have every thing which they think good, as Conſcience and Religion, and every thing that is really evil, as Pride, Ambition and Revenge, to oblige them unto the contrary, I ſhall not be alone in being deceived. But this one conſideration is ſufficient to caſt out all thoughts of any Reconciliation with the Church of *Rome*. For although they ſhould never ſo earneſtly deſire it, as that which would bring Dominion, Profit, Advantage and Reputation unto them, yet is it not in their Power, continuing what they are, to make any ſuch Conceſſions as ſhall alter their State, or once touch the Reaſons of the *Proteſtants* departure from them. And ſeeing what they ſuppoſe they may grant, will not be upon a Conviction of Truth, that ſuch ought to be, as if before they had been in a Miſtake, but only to comply with a preſent Exigence for their Advantage, it will be recalled whenever they judge it meet to take it away again.

Upon the whole matter, the Reconciliation deſigned on the moſt plauſible Terms that have ever yet been propoſed, is nothing but an hood-winkt Defection to *Rome*, accumulated with a charge on the Conſciences of them who ſhall comply therewith, of the Guilt of all the Miſeries and blood of them by whom it will be refuſed.

But there are on the other ſide certain conſiderations that may be laid in the Ballance againſt theſe Dangers or the fears of them as unto the Event; And I ſhall briefly mention them alſo. For,

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1. The Honour of Chriſt himſelf ſeems to be engaged for the preſervation of the Light and Truth of the Goſpel where it hath been profeſſed. And ſo it is undoubtedly, unleſs the Sins and Ingratitude of the Generality of them by whom it is profeſſed, do require that they be dealt withall in his ſeverity. In that caſe the Glory and Honour of Chriſt are more engaged to remove and take away the Bleſſing of it from any Place or People, than to put forth his Power for its preſervation and continuance. Now although it muſt be acknowledged, that the Sins of theſe and other *Proteſtant* Nations, have been of an high provoking Nature unto the Eyes of his Glory; yet it may be hoped that they have not exceeded the bounds of his Patience and Forbearance. And whether it be ſo or no, there will be a ſpeedy Diſcovery. For if on the many intimations which he hath given them of his Diſpleaſure, his many calls to Repentance mixed with Threatnings, they will now at laſt return unto him from the evil of their ways, and make their Repentance evident by the Fruits of it, he will undoubtedly continue his preſence among them and his care over them.

But if notwithſtanding all that they hear, and feel, and fear at preſent, notwithſtanding all Divine warnings and Indications of his Diſpleaſure, they will go on frowardly in their own wayes, unto the high Diſhonour of himſelf and his Goſpel, cauſing his Name and wayes to be Blaſphemed among the Idolatrous Nations, the Event muſt be left in the depths of Infinite Wiſdom with Soveraign Grace and Mercy.

2. Notwithſtanding all that Profaneneſs and Wickedneſs of Life wherein Multitudes are immerſed who outwardly profeſs the *Proteſtant* Religion, there is a Remnant in the Nations where it is profeſſed, who manifeſt

the Power of it in their Lives, and glorifie Chriſt by their Profeſſion and Obedience unto all his Commands, walking worthy of the Goſpel in all Holy Converſation. Nor are this ſort confined to any one Party or Peculiar way among them, but are found in the whole Body or Community of the *Proteſtant* Profeſſion. What Influence theſe have on many accounts into the preſervation of the Light of the Goſpel in the Places, Times and Nations wherein their Lot and Portion is caſt by Divine Providence, is not here to be declared; the Scripture will give a ſufficient account of it.

3. There is evidently at preſent a Spirit of Courage and Chriſtian Magnanimity come upon many, whoſe other Circumſtances render them conſiderable in the World, to do and ſuffer whatever they ſhall Lawfully be called unto, for the defence of this *Proteſtant* Religion. This alſo is from God; and if his purpoſe were utterly to ruine that Intereſt, it is more ſuited unto former Diſpenſations of his Providence in like caſes, to ſend Weakneſs, Faintneſs, Cowardice and Deſpondency into the Hearts of thoſe concerned, than to give them a Spirit of Courage and Reſolution for their Duty. And hereunto alſo belongs that Revival of Zeal for their Religion and the Concernments of it, which hath of late been ſtirred up even in the *Body of the People*, taking occaſion from the Oppoſition made unto it, and the dangers whereunto it hath been reduced. If theſe things are from God, as they ſeem to be, they will not be ſo eaſily run down, as ſome Imagine. For whatever means he will make uſe of, be they in themſelves never ſo weak and contemptible, they ſhall be effectual unto the End whereunto they are deſigned. And therefore there is no ſmall Indication in them, that it is in the Councel of the Divine Will as yet to preſerve the Profeſſion of the

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Proteſtant Religion, though it may be ſorely ſhaken.

4. The ſtrange Diſcoveries that have been made of the *Plots* and Deſigns of the Enemies of this Religion with the Diſappointment of many of them, are alſo a Pledge of the care of God over it. Wiſe and conſidering Men knew well enough that they were at work with all Diligence, Craft and Induſtry, for the accompliſhment of what they had long deſigned, and which for *ſome Ages* they had been engaged in various contrivances to bring about. But what they ſaw of the Effects of their Counſels, they could not remove; and all the ſpecialties of their Deſignwere hid from them. The generality of Men in the mean time, were in the higheſt Security, ſome enjoying themſelves in the Advantages which they hold by the Profeſſion of Religion, and others altogether regardleſs of theſe Things. But in this State of things, the Providence of God making uſe of the unparallel'd Confidence and precipitation of the Enemies themſelves, by ſtrange and unexpected means, layes open their works of Darkneſs, awakens the Nation unto the Conſideration of its Danger, variouſly diſappoints their Helliſh Plots, and puts the Minds of Multitudes, it may be *Millions*, into a poſture of taking care about thoſe concernments of their Religion, which they had aſſuredly been ſurprized into the Loſs of, had they continued in the Security from which their Enemies awakened them. And it may be well ſuppoſed, that nothing but Sin and the higheſt Ingratitude can divert or ſtop the progreſs of thoſe ſtreams of Providence, whoſe Springs were undeſerved Mercy and Bounty.

For although the Wiſdom, Juſtice, and Honour of the Nation in the Actings of the King as Supream, of both Houſes of Parliament, in the Judges and their Legal Adminiſtrations, with the Piety of the Church in the

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Obſervation of a Day of Faſting and Prayer with reſpect hereunto, be every Day expoſed to Scorn and Contempt in the Papers and Pamphlets of unknown Perſons, by decrying the Plot, and vilifying the Diſcoveries of it (a practice never allowed, never tolerated in any other well ordered Government, as that which would tend to its Diſſolution) yet all ſober Men have ſufficient Evidence of the Hand of God in theſe things, to make them an Argument of his Watchful care over the *Proteſtant Religion*.

And unto all theſe things we may add, the fatal Miſcarriages and miſerable ends of ſuch *Apoſtates* from the true Religion, as have not been contented to ruine their own Souls alone, but have been active and Inſtrumental in their Capacities, to draw or drive others into the ſame Perdition. Examples in this kind might be multiplied, ſufficient to ſtop this ſort of Perſons in their career, if an open diſcovery of the Pit whereinto they will precipitate themſelves, may have any influence upon them.

Some few things may yet be added concerning the outward means of the preſervation of the *Proteſtant* Religion as unto its publick Profeſſion, (for the thing it ſelf will be preſerved in deſpite of the World) which thoſe concerned therein, may do well to apply themſelves unto. And I ſhall only name them at preſent.

And the firſt is, fervent Prayers to Almighty God, that the Princes and Potentates of the Earth may have Light to diſcern that their Principal Intereſt in this World lyes in its preſervation. And although ſome Reaſons that may induce them hereunto, may not ſeem of force unto them, yet there is one that is uncontrollable. For where the *Proteſtant* Religion is received, publickly profeſſed, and eſtabliſhed by Law, it cannot be changed without the extream Havock and Ruine of the greateſt

greateſt and beſt part of their Subjects, in all their Temporal concerns. And this there is no doubt but that they are obliged ſo far as in them lies to prevent, as they will give an account unto God of the Truſt repoſed in them. For as things are ſtated in the World, as the Deſigns and Intereſts of the Parties at variance are formed, it is a madneſs to ſuppoſe that any Alteration can be made herein, without theſe direful Effects; and if they ſhould be covered for a Seaſon, they will break forth afterwards with more rage and fury. But I refer this unto the Wiſdom of them that are concerned.

It is alſo neceſſary hereunto, that all thoſe who ſincerely own this Religion, and make it the Rule of their Living unto God, in Hopes of the Eternal Enjoyment of him in another World, do depoſe the conſideration of the leſſer Differences amongſt themſelves, and unite in one common Deſign and Intereſt to oppoſe the Entrances and Growth of Popery among us. And it is an hard thing to perſwade Rational Men, that they are in Earneſt for its Oppoſition and Excluſion, who are not willing ſo to do.

But that whereon amongſt our ſelves the Event of this Conteſt doth depend, is the Repentance and Reformation of all them that profeſs this Religion, upon the Divine calls and warnings which they have received.

For a cloſe of this Diſcourſe, if we may ſuppoſe what we may juſtly fear, namely, that the Holy God, to puniſh the horrible Sins and Ingratitude of the Nations profeſſing the *Proteſtant* Religion, ſhould ſuffer the Profeſſion of it by any of theſe means or any other that he ſhall think meet to uſe in his Holy permiſſion, to be extinguiſhed for a Seaſon, and remove the Light of the Goſpel from theſe Nations, we may yet conclude Two things.

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1. That it ſhall iſſue at laſt in the Advantage of the Church. *Antichriſt* ſhall not be a final Gainer in this conteſt. His ſucceſs herein will be the Forerunner of his utter Deſtruction. The healing of his *deadly* wound, will preſerve his Life but for a little while. Religion ſhall be again reſtored in a more refined Profeſſion. There ſhall enſue hereon no new Revelations, no new Doctrines, no new Scriptures, no new Ordinances of Worſhip; the Subſtance of the *Proteſtant* Doctrine, Religion and Worſhip ſhall be preſerved, reſtored, beautified in themſelves, and in their Power, in them by whom they ſhall be profeſſed: The Demonſtration whereof, ſhall be given elſewhere.

2. In the mean time, to ſuffer for it even unto Death, is the moſt glorious Cauſe wherein we can be engaged, and wherein we ſhall be undoubtedly victorious. It is no leſs Glorious in the Sight of God, no leſs Acceptable with him, to ſuffer in giving Teſtimony againſt the Abominations of the Apoſtate Antichriſtian Church-State, than to ſuffer for the Goſpel it ſelf in Oppoſition to Idolatrous *Paganiſm*.

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